

REMARKS

Present Status of the Application

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Claims 1, 2, 4-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hagiwara (JP 2002-195265) in view of Ishikawa (JP 2000-120664). Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hagiwara in view of Mori et al. (U.S. Pub. 2002/0025089; hereinafter Mori). Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hagiwara in view of Ishikawa and Mori. Applicants have amended claims 1 and 5, in which claim 5 has been written into independent method claim.

Claims 1-7 remain pending in the present application, and reconsideration of those claims is respectfully requested.

Discussion of the claim rejection under 35 USC 112

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Applicants have amended claim 5 into independent method claim.

Discussion of the claim rejections under 35 USC 103

Claims 1, 2, 4-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hagiwara in view of Ishikawa. Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hagiwara in view of Mori et al.. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hagiwara in view of Ishikawa and Mori. Applicants have amended claim 1 and respectfully traverse the rejections for at least the reasons set forth below.

1. As described in specification on page 9, lines 8-12 and shown in FIG. 3, the lower surface 7c1 is further recited. The lower surface 7c1 has the effect in operation.

As shown in the drawing of Appendix, if the lower surface 7c1' is the same height as the innermost ridge at height P2' the operation is not efficient. In Appendix, the dynamic pressure generating grooves can be molded by press working for the construction that both the surface 7c1' and the dynamic pressure generating groove area P' have the same height. However, in this construction, the surface 7c1' on the inner diameter side other than the dynamic pressure generating groove area P' will become close to or contact to the end surface of the flange portion 2b (see Fig. 1) in case that the material warps as shown in Figs 9a and 9b, thereby causing the increase of the torque and the wearing out of the thrust surface at the early stage.

With respect to claim 5,

2. In re In re Hagiwara, the groove pattern on the end surface of plate 80 and 90 is disclosed ([0022]). However, as noted by the Examiner, Hagiwara does not disclose the difference in height for the groove pattern.

Even further, Hagiwara does not disclose the lower surface level at the surface 7c1 of the central region, as currently recited in claim 1.

4. In re Ishikawa, the Examiner then further cites Ishikawa for providing the disclosure in height difference. However, the Examiner improperly constructs Ishikawa. The dynamic pressure generating pattern parts 21a and 21b are on the thrust plates 21 and 23 without specifically disclosing the claims features. The slant surface 7a is formed on the outer cylinder 7 but not on the thrust plates 21 and 23.

Even further, as the feature recited in currently amended claim 1, Ishikawa also does not disclose that the lower surface level at the surface 7c1 of the central region.

5. In re Mori ([0027]), the flatness is referring to the end surfaces 3b1 and 3b2 of the flange portion 3b. The flatness does not specifically require the decreasing in height for the dynamic pressure generating groove area.

Even further, as the feature recited in currently amended claim 1, Mori also does not disclose that the lower surface level at the surface 7c1 of the central region.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1 and 5 patently defines over the prior art references, and should be allowed. For at least the same reasons, dependent claims 2-4 and 6-7 patently define over the prior art references as well.

CONCLUSION

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is believed that all the pending claims 1-7 of the present application patently define over the prior art and are in proper condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite the examination of the above-identified patent application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: November 30, 2009

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Appendix

